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JAPAN SEIKOKAI AUGUST 15 PEACE APPEAL

An August 15 Peace Appeal was announced by the six committees of the Japan Seikokai (Anglican Church). In the appeal there was a warning of the dangers of militarization and stress laid on the importance of being peacemakers. The following is a translation of the Seikokai statement:

We Christians are constrained to seek true peace in Jesus Christ. However, when the Japanese military invaded other Asian countries during the Pacific War, the churches in Japan were unable to comprehend the meanings of war and kept silent or followed the orders of the military government. Moreover, we followed the national policy incorporated in State Shinto which is not even a religion but rather a traditional identity system of the people, and we also participated in the Yasukuni Shrine ceremonies and prayed for Japan's victory in war.

The Japan Anglican Church has never made a serious evaluation of what the Anglican Church did in the past in this regard. During May of 1986 the 41st General Assembly of the church decided to remove prayers for the Emperor and the imperial families from the prayer book of the church. The Japan Seikokai confesses its sins committed against all peoples, particularly those in other Asian countries.

In the same manner we were unable to see the realities of Okinawa. At the end of the Pacific War, 150,000 or one fourth of all Okinawans had been killed in order to protect the vested interests surrounding the emperor system on the mainland.

We speak of peace but ignore the reality of the presence of US military bases,

retaining 75% of the US military presence in Japan in Okinawa.

It is well known that nuclear weapons are retained on land in Okinawa.

When public school teachers have objected to the uses of the Japanese flag and the quasi-national anthem, Kimigayo, they have been discharged from their jobs.

The emperor is to visit Okinawa this year. Is the intention only to erase the emperor's war responsibility by writing a final closing chapter to the war tragedies?

It is necessary for us to understand that 850,000 military personnel and 650,000 civilians were killed for the sake of Japan's militarism and were sacrificed by the emperor.

We must understand that 20,000,000 people in Asia and the Pacific Islands were killed by Japan's militarism under the emperor. Such cruel acts must never be repeated, nor can we ever again remain uninterested in such realities, for we know how great the sins were.

Proposals for August 15 as the beginning of our repentance would be:

1. In order to make known the horrors of war for the generations today that have not known such, it is necessary to pray for peace while having meetings for witnessing to the reality of Pacific War victims, including the hearing of voices of other Asian and Pacific peoples.

2. Only through being peacemakers can we redeem the many lives sacrificed in the war. Especially when Japan is heading towards ever greater militarization, moving to nationalize the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine, and acting to suppress freedom of speech through the creation of the Nation-

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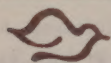
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al Secrets Law, we must press forward on all fronts in an all-out effort to prevent Japan's further thrusts toward militarization.

3. Our centennial celebration theme was "To Make Us Instruments of Thy Peace" and we are taking specific actions and making specific efforts to fulfill the requirements laid upon us by this theme. For example, we must act in order to eliminate discrimination in society. We must take action to create reconciliation, social justice, welfare of the people and the promotion of human rights.

Our Lord walked together with the oppressed and discriminated against, the least of these brothers and sisters. As the basic Christian way we will follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

In remembering the 42nd year of the post-war era, we remember the great tragedies of the war and are thus lead to repentance so that we may again commit ourselves to peace.



PEACE CARAVAN

The Wife of a Fisherman:

"The nuclear fuel reprocessing plant will never come to this land, because our children suffer after we die!"

A Christian Farmer:

"It is nothing but a crime against God to defile the land and destroy living things on the land with nuclear wastes."

The NCC Peace Committee organized a peace caravan to the northern part of Japan between July 27 and August 3, 1987. Most of the committee members and their supporters, fifteen in total, took the 2,000 kilometer trip in two cars. The purpose of the caravan was to deepen fellowship with Christians in local churches, strengthen ties, and share with one another and with the active citizens of the land, and especially to learn from the farmers and fishermen in Rokkasho village, who are

struggling against the plan to construct a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in their area.

On the first day we were welcomed by the Rev. Y. Kobayashi and members of Shinobu Church (Kyodan) at Fukuoka City and a peace rally was held there. Then we continued the caravan trip to Hachinohe, Misawa, and Sendai.

Information exchange took place as to the Yokosuka US Navy Base (Rev. T. Kimura, chairperson of the Kanagawa District Church & Society Committee, Kyodan), and the Atsugi Air Base (Mr. T. Tsunoda, a plaintiff in the Atsugi air base noise pollution suit). This was followed by peace issues presented by Ms. M. Komoto (an organizer of women's peace groups) and Ms. M. Watanabe (President of the Japan YWCA). The Yasukuni Shinto Shrine and Japan's militarization (Ms. S. Moriyama), the movement to refuse payment of taxes for military purposes (Prof. S. Ishitani, representative of the plaintiffs in the court struggle), US Nuclear Issues and Japan (Mr. D. Swain, Kyodan missionary) and biblical interpretation on peace issues (Dr. S. Suzuki and Rev. T. Shoji).

There were the special and exciting opportunities to share with many Christians in the Oou District of the Kyodan through joining in the church retreat held on the shores of Lake Towada. More than 300 laypersons and pastors from 55 churches attended the retreat. The Oou District Assembly during May of last year adopted a resolution opposing the plan to construct a nuclear reprocessing plant at Rokkasho Village.

Our visit was timely and we were allowed an excellent sharing of concerns and exchange of information. Our hopes for the mission of the church were renewed by meeting local persons and coming to know of their active work.

In Sendai we had a three-day peace consultation. Dividing our group in order to go to six churches in the city. We observed Peace Sunday services and in the afternoon and joined in peace and anti-nuclear demonstrations in the streets.

The Rev. M. Iwata of the Hachinohe Church

(Kyodan) guided us in the meeting with a group called "Citizens in Opposition to the Nuclear Ashes of Death", Citizens in Opposition to Misawa Air Base, the farmers of Rokkasho Village and the former Rokkasho Village headman.

Our observation of the F16 and P3C military aircraft, the "elephant cage" and sophisticated communication facilities made us fully aware of the fact that the Misawa base is one of the key front line fortresses in the US nuclear strategy.

Rokkasho Village is not a suitable place for agriculture. It is cold, windy, misty, and the land retains an acid soil. Those who returned to Japan from the former colonies after World War II settled in the area with great pain and difficulty. These people were left far behind the rapid industrial development of Japan leaving them always disadvantaged in the economic sphere.

Ten years ago, the Aomori Prefectural government made plans for industrialization. Villagers gave up their land for the dream that someday they would be hired by large companies. But no industry came. People lost their land and work. Leaving children and the aged in the villages people of all ages went to find work. Now the central government has decided to use the village land for a nuclear wastes recycling plant, nuclear waste dumping ground and for the uranium concentration industry.

The prefectural government has accepted this proposal of the national government in order to cover-up the failure of the development plan. However, the area is in the worst possible situation in relation to such nuclear facilities because it is in an earthquake zone and the ground is soft with lakes and swamps.

Radioactive substances will be diffused very easily through aquatic systems. Moreover, the selected area is just next to the Misawa Air Base and jet fighters fly everyday over the area for target practice.

Fishermen who still hold fishing rights are steadfastly fighting to retain the integrity of the ecology in the area.

Though the situation is difficult, they are not despairing and as such have given us the power to work in the hope of humankind.

In solidarity with those people who are struggling in the area, the NCC Peace Committee is committed to joining in the anti-nuclear fuel reprocessing plant campaign in cooperation with the Oou District of the United Church of Christ.

Tsutomu Shoji, Chairperson - Peace Committee, NCCJ



EXPATRIATE ASIAN WORKERS IN JAPAN SEEKING A NEW ENCOUNTER

ACTUAL CONDITIONS

Yayori Matsui:

We do not know the exact numbers of expatriate Asian workers in Japan. The number of illegal workers designated by the immigration office indicates that there are ten times more such workers than five years ago. We must base our knowledge of these expatriate workers from other Asian countries on a clear understanding of the labor market structure in Japan.

The sex industry in Japan is prospering but there are not enough young workers. The result is that women are brought to Japan for that purpose.

Naoko Iyori:

A few years ago it was said that 40% of the workers in Japan's sex industries were from other Asian countries but now more than 50% are from overseas.

Matsui:

Expatriate Asian male workers are increasing in numbers as well. The immigration office arrested 687 illegal male workers in 1985 but in 1987 that number reached 2,200. This morning I had a call from a young man who explained his situation to me. Hoping for better work in Japan he came to Narita but could not find a con-

tact person. He stayed in a hotel where he was approached by another Filipino who said he could find him a job as an underground construction worker with hours between 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. This young man was crying on the other end of the telephone line saying that he had no food and no place to live. He was saying that Filipinos are being used in work that the Japanese do not want to do.

Munetoshi Maejima:

These problems are connected with Japan's industrial structure which is based on the use of cheap labor from other Asian nations.

Matsui:

When depression times come, industries use only cheap labor in order that their corporate survival is assured.

Maejima:

I have been told that atomic energy plants are using these workers. When the news of the energy plant construction was announced, gangsters went into town. Their purpose was to control the expatriate Asian labor forces for the atomic energy plants.

Matsui:

I know of many cases of laborers who came to Japan with a six month visa for learning the language. Presently there are 400 Japanese language schools and some of them have less than 50 students. The Ministry of Justice made a survey of the Japanese language schools and 140 out of 400 schools answered the questions posed by the ministry. It is said that about 30 of the schools are instituted for genuine language study while the rest of them exist only to issue the administrative papers for visa procurement purposes.

Iyori:

I was told that an applicant for a language school has to pay a certain amount of money to the school in order that it act as guarantor for entry into the country plus a fee for the 20 hours of lessons a week, a job arrangement fee, and money

for absence from classes for visa renewal purposes. There are people who take money from these workers at all levels. They are not called by name but treated as non-humans.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Matsui:

The Ministry of Justice has not changed its policies so that the entry of manual laborers into Japan is still prohibited. But in reality, arrests of illegal laboring people are increasing. The government has no office to care for them. Ninety-three percent of the deportations that have taken place are voluntary surrenders to the immigration office. Although the Ministry of Justice hesitates to issue visas, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot refuse issuing visas when all necessary papers are presented to them. From the point of view of diplomatic relations and the emphasis on internationalization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has no choice but to issue visas.

The Ministry of Labor refuses to encourage foreign laborers in Japan because of the pressure applied by Japan's labor unions.

WHAT WE CAN DO:

Our discussion here is not to focus on whether or not Japan should accept foreign laborers, but rather on how we can extend our helping activities to those who are already in Japan in an effort to have them treated as human beings. I believe we must handle the situation in three ways: First, in the long view we need to work so as to decrease the economic inequality between north-south. Second, Japan has to decide whether or not to accept laborers from abroad. Third, we must deal with finding solutions to the human rights violations perpetrated against these people while they are in Japan.

Maejima:

Within these contexts we must consider the evil circle of exports of Japanese industries to other Asian countries which increase unemployment in those countries

and at the same time the import of laborers to do the work that the Japanese do not want to do.

Matsui:

Presently a Japanese day laborer is paid about 8000 yen for a day's work and illegal workers receive less than Y4000. Even though a Filipino man receives half that of a Japanese worker, and works only four to five days a month, such still allows him to send back money for his family in the Philippines. Japanese laborers see them as competitors in their labor market. It is necessary for laboring people to change their consciousness.

Maejima:

Not only do the administrators and laws need changing but also the people who support those laws must learn to change. We must learn to see these expatriate persons as individuals instead of digits in labor statistics.

Matsui:

We should be evaluating the injustices of the world economic system. The Japanese government has spent 1,200,000,000,000 yen on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) but said foreign aid very rarely reaches the lives of the poor and powerless masses of Asia. Labor unions, consumers unions, and women's groups should be concerned with the totality of these issues.

Iyori:

Now we have a chance to relate ourselves with others as human beings. Churches are trying to communicate with expatriate Asians through English and Tagalog services. Education for humanization should start from our daily lives.

(Taken from Asia Tsushin #53)

PATTERNS OF EXPLOITATION

There were seven of them that weltering day in June at Narita Airport. It was

the first time for them to travel to Japan or even to travel abroad. They were hopeful laborers promised a \$600 a month wage. They were told that they would be working in factories and restaurants. Japanese factories with their world-famous state-of-the art technology would be enough to assure them that all would be well and comfortable.

They had sold some family properties and raised the money for the trip. One young man was able to persuade his family to sell their small farm lot so that he could put up the 60,000 yen that the promoter was asking for. Anyway with the money he would earn from his job, he "could easily pay them back and even buy a bigger farm lot." The family never had any doubts about these dreams of prosperity.

All of the families had been in the crowded Manila International Airport, each of their kin had pinning great hopes on those going, and their young friends were envying them for their sweet luck.

After arriving at Narita Airport and having gone through immigrations and customs, a representative from their recruiter appeared and informed them that he must bring the first two of the seven to their employer. He would then be back to take the remaining five to their place of work. Two, three, five hours passed and no recruiter or representative ever came back to take them from the airport.

They all began to understand that they had been cheated. The thought of the money that had gone out for this trip was strong but the will to survive that moment was stronger. They could not go back to the Philippines. They certainly could stand the ridicule. But, would they be able to stand the tears of their families over the money and properties gone for naught. They decided to go to Tokyo.

In Tokyo, they met a Filipina who works as a hostess in one of the clubs in Roppongi. She took them to her home. However, since she herself was living on a budget, she looked for other Filipinos who could help these five men find jobs. She was fortunate to find work. It was the beginning of their terms in Japan as laborers.

The money they had given to the promoter was never recovered. Unaware of their illegal statuses, these young men were working with their tourist visas having expired. Veteran laborers call them "OS" (overstaying) but nobody seemed to be aware of the real consequence of this status.

When they have enough money to pay back the debts they owe the money lenders, or buy back some of the family property, or give to their parents who had expected the realization of the dream of prosperity, then they will go the way of the old laborers; they will surrender to the immigration officials, endure the humiliation, and fulfill the dream of prosperity when they are reunited with their families in some squatter area in Manila, or an island in Negros, or in that quiet farm in Bikol.

Cases of Filipino laborers in Japan go to the harsh extremes. In Ueno I met a well-dressed Filipino who had just arrived from Manila. The same pattern had occurred: he had been promised a job in a nameless factory in some Japanese city. When he arrived at Narita Airport, no promoter was there to meet him to refund him the money he spent for the trip. He decided to go with two Filipina entertainers who, although were not met by their Japanese manager, had managed to survive the "Japanese trick", for it was their second time to be in Japan. When I met him, the guy was bound for some factories in some town the name of which he could not recall. He was clutching a small book containing the telephone numbers of Japanese employers who would be there "when he needed help."

The case of Mario was different. He was a musician in the Middle East when with others he was recruited by a Japanese promoter. Upon arrival in Japan, they found that they had to work not only as musicians but also as "janitors". At the end of each day, they were made to stay behind to clean the bar or club in which they were working. The main thing which troubled them was that the other musicians, all Japanese, were not asked to do this extra work. They had a disagreement with the club owner over this fact. They decided to leave the establishment.

Since Mario was not able to look for another job as a guitarist, he settled for a job as a waiter. The salary was low, and the hours undetermined. The owner was strict. But he had to work because in the previous job they had not been given the correct salary. The club owner's reason: breach of contract. It was not long before the manager in the second place where he was working, decided to fire him.

He went to Yokohama to join some Filipino musicians. At this point his visa had already expired. The last time I heard from him he was working as a laborer in a construction company. The wages are much lower: the work is much tougher. No contracts exist to ensure him of a continuous and stable job. He cannot go home. The savings he had were all spent during those days when he was looking for a job.

After America, Japan is looked upon by Filipino laborers as a place where one can easily find a job. Japan does not see itself yet as a labor refuge for neighboring country Asians seeking in its many factories some shelter from unemployment and poverty. The palpable reality, at the moment, is that these laborers provide cheap labor but are working illegally. They are also seen as coming to Japan on the basis of fake documents.

The hungry days they go through in between jobs, and the homeless nights during jobless times, the humiliations they go through because "they don't see us as human beings", will remain unwritten. This is because the laws of the land are more important and trade deficits and rearmament talks are the more urgent matters for discussion.

Fidel Genova



MIGRATING WORKERS

Expatriate laboring people from other Asian countries did not become news for the mass media until the incident that occurred in September 1986 when a Thai worker was killed in a traffic accident in Mie Prefecture.

Several workers in Kamagasaki have indicated that they work side by side with Filipinos. In March of this year I met more than 10 workers from the Philippines at the Osaka airport. They were getting ready to go home. A Japanese man spoke with them in broken English and one of them translated his words into Tagalog. The man was counting money. I could see from their looks that they were not entertainers. I do not know anything of the process through which they gained entry into Japan, but they came into Japan when construction was booming and went home when the construction work became scarce in April. (Usually in Japan's labor market it is difficult to find work between April and July.)

In November of 1986 the death of a Filipino in a traffic accident in Chiba was reported in the newspapers. Through this we were able to discover the addresses of other Filipino workers but could not discover where these people were working in Japan. Now we are making an appeal to the day laborers in English, Tagalog, and Thai, in order to communicate with those who have to work in the shadows of this vast industrial complex and to know where they are located in this uncaring society.

Rev. Nobuaki Koyanagi (Summary Translation from Asia Tsushin # 53)

THE 42nd YEAR OF THE ATOMIC WAR

Every year, under the sweltering heat of the August tea house moon, peace activists and their various movements gather steam in their efforts to hold rallies and meetings centering on Hiroshima Day (Aug. 6), Nagasaki Day (Aug. 9) and The End of World War II (Aug. 15).

While the extreme rightist groups in Japan are racing around the country calling for the destruction of teachers' unions, the revision of the "Peace Constitution", and placing pressure on politicians to worship at the Yasukuni Shrine for the war dead, Christians and various of their related citizens' organizations are trying to

rebuild relationships with the peoples in other Asian countries.

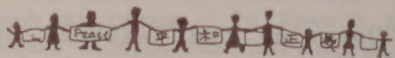
The following provides some idea of the direction taken by the meetings for peace that were listed in August by the "Christ Weekly" newspaper.

1. "Prayer Service at the Grave of the Unknown Soldier" Tokyo.
2. "Japan's Constitution in the World" Tokyo.
3. "What of Japanese Militarization Now?" Tokyo YWCA.
4. "Japan in the Eyes of Other Asians" and "The Implications of Overcoming the Boundaries of the State" Tokyo.
5. "Evaluating Japan's Military Invasions and Countering Japanese Militarism" Tokyo.
6. "Opposing the Yasukuni Shrine" Tokyo.
7. "Building Peace - Differences between West Germany and Japan" Tokyo.
8. "Three Minutes Before Nuclear War" Yokota US Air Base.
9. "Looking Again at Pre-War Japan from the Vantage Point of the Nuclear Age" Tokyo.
10. "Christians in Opposition to the Proposed National Secrets Law" Yokohama.

On the occasion of this 50th anniversary year of the Rape of Nanking the following meetings were held.

12. "Remembering the Asian and Pacific War Victims" Niigata City.
13. "Matsumoto Peace Prayer Service" Nagano City.
14. "Peace Meeting with Ayako Sekiya" Shizuoka.
15. "Remembering the War Victims of Asia and the Pacific" Gifu City.

16. "Remembering the War Victims of Asia and the Pacific" Osaka.
17. "Seeking Peace" Kyoto YMCA.
18. "To People Who Love Peace" Nara YMCA.
19. "Remembering the War Victims of Asia and the Pacific" Kyoto
20. "Peace Prayer Service" Osaka.
21. "It Will Be Too Late - Realities of Democracy and the Proposed National Secrets Law" Kobe YMCA.
22. "Asia and Japan" Kobe.
23. "Seeking Better Relations Between the Korean Christian Church and the UCC Japan" Okayama City.
24. "Remembering the War Victims of Asia and the Pacific" Okinawa.



IN SEARCH OF PEACE THE EVERLASTING VIGIL

It happens every year. The government of Japan institutes its service in commemoration of the war dead. The newspaper photographs are also always the same. There is the Emperor of Japan, a little old man cowed by the ravages of age, standing before a cenotaph designating the 3,100,000 nameless souls who died purportedly for that very same little cowed man and the nation that he represents.

Yes, the photographs are always the same. The Emperor stands alone before that wall of flowers, one for each of those 3,100,000 agonizing deaths, and below this surrealistic alter to violence and national chauvinism, stand the loyal subjects of the Emperor, removed from him both in height and in interaction.

One wonders, upon seeing this image in the papers, what is it that goes through the mind of this little bent over personage as he stares at all these flowers and ponders what might have happened if he had moved to smother the militarism of his younger

days.

But then one asks the question, where are all the flowers that should be laid out on that very same alter for all those people who were wasted by these very same soldiers of the Emperor.

Supposing that each one of these 3,100,000 soldiers, obeying the command of the Emperor, killed one other person each? (An absurd understatement of the actual deaths caused by the emperor's men.) An added 3,100,000 people as victims of the army of the Emperor.

This should be a very very heavy burden to carry for any human being. To know that one is responsible for the deaths of at least 6,200,000 persons but probably many many more, should break the soul of most ordinary persons, but the Emperor stands there, says a few words, and then is removed from the stage, to be saved for the next ceremony.

The surrealism of it all is beyond comprehension. Here is this small nation of 130,000,000 people going through this lockstep ritual once each year to commemorate the war dead, and in every way possible preparing for yet another war, in the name of national defense, in the name of the Emperor.

Is there no stopping the war lust that lurks in the hearts of humankind? Is there no way to defeat this constant and continuing process of praying for peace but doing everything, with all strength and zeal, to make ready for war? Why must this sickness continue to haunt and corrupt the soul of humankind. Is there really no hope for the future of the human race? How many other of Japan's Emperors will stand before that ever growing sea of flowers and go through the motions of praying for the repose of their uncountable war dead? AAC

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